

### Q&A With Interior Designer Thom Filicia



**NYS:** Why did you decide to partner with Grace Bay Resorts?

**TF:** I was very excited about working with the team at Grace Bay Club. Right after meeting them I thought they were so enthusiastic and fantastic. They are looking forward in an optimistic, cool way that I wanted to be a part of. The project itself is exciting in that I have the opportunity to refine the aesthetic of a property and create a look and feel very specific to Grace Bay Club, something that stands apart from the other properties on-island.

**TF:** I also loved the challenge of taking the different parts of the resort—the Villas, the Hotel, The Estates and The Residences—and connecting them through a design point of view. I wanted

everything to be connected and to feel distinctly Grace Bay.

**NYS:** We understand the first design project with Grace Bay Resorts will be to create a contemporary living concept for the Grace Bay Club in Turks and Caicos. We are extremely jealous, what is working on the island like?

**TF:** What I love about Turks & Caicos is the friendliness about the island, the way you're greeted on the properties and at the restaurants. The island really caters to the traveler in a nice way, and everyone has a pleasant, easy personality. There's a wonderful energy that's unique to Turks & Caicos, and it's something I was really drawn to from the beginning.

**NYS:** What approach will you take on the design of the Grace Bay Club?

**TF:** I want to capture the spirit, lifestyle and point-of-view of Grace Bay Club. In terms of the lifestyle of the property, Grace Bay Club is relaxed, easy and beachy. It's not self-conscious or overly designed, and with the new design-direction I wanted to give the property a more immediately recognizable sense of self. I want people to say, "that's so Grace Bay!" This project has been about taking Grace Bay Club's relaxed point-of-view and refining it in a stylish way that is still authentic to the property. The resort already has great products—the Hotel, the Villas, the Residences, their restaurant and bar concepts, and poolscapes—they were simply in need of someone to serve as a design director, or visual voice, who can help create cohesion across the property and tell the story of how all of these elements are connected.



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**NYS:** What is your color scheme like and what are your influences?

**TF:** The location of [Grace Bay Club](#) was hugely influential in the design concept and color scheme. The lifestyle on the island and at the resort are what I tried to capture and communicate through design. The landscape, waterscape, island itself, all played a major role in my choice of fabrics and materials, lighting and color palette.

**NYS:** Why do you think your aesthetic is suited for a marriage of design with [Grace Bay Resorts](#)?

**TF:** As a designer, I love to capture the personality of my clients, regardless of whether that client is a brand, an individual or a family. I want to create design that is authentic, not formulaic, and a design that tells the story of the client.

**NYS:** You are also working on The Residences—what [Grace Bay Resorts](#) describes as “the company’s first private residential micro-resort of ultra-luxury, single-family beachfront homes.” What, if any, are the differences in approaches in the design as a whole of The Residences compared to the [Grace Bay Club](#)?

**TF:** [Grace Bay Club](#) is all about participation. There are different areas for families and adults, but there are lots of areas where everyone has the ability to overlap and meet each other. The resort has a real social aspect.

**TF:** The Residences are a bit different because they are all about privacy. They provide a private environment where guests have their own beach, pool, living room, check-in area, gym, etc. The Residences offer a different level of exclusivity. It’s almost like having your own private home in Turks & Caicos! If you chose, however, you can connect back with the main property and be as active and engaged as you like, which is what really defines [Grace Bay](#) and what it has to offer.

**NYS:** What style of furniture did you outfit them with? Did you include your own designs in the process?

**TF:** We’re just embarking on this part of the design process, but generally we’re using a combination of simple, easy and sophisticated pieces. I’m using natural woven pieces in a way that is both earthy and modern—not modern in a way that’s slick, but clean and classic, timeless and fresh. We want the furniture to be friendly and exciting with a distinct island point of view.

**NYS:** You have your own to-the-trade showroom, [Sedgwick & Brattle](#), at the New York Design Center. Will we see pieces from your showroom throughout?

**TF:** If there are places where pieces from our line make sense, then I’ll absolutely use them. However, it’s more about creating a space that is not only beautiful, but makes sense for the use. For [Grace Bay Club](#), we know that these products are going to get a lot of use. While the pieces need to be beautiful, they must also be durable and functional. Practicality is essential, and we have to take into account the natural setting and the elements, including sun, salt and sand, to ensure that these pieces will stand the test of time, both functionally and aesthetically.

**NYS:** What is currently your favorite aspect of working with [Grace Bay Resorts](#)?

**TF:** I love the challenge of connecting all the dots, from a creative standpoint. I also enjoy working with the team and the opportunity to see the behind-the-scenes life of Turks & Caicos and get a real feel for how it functions as both a vacation destination and a home for the locals. Overall, the response to what we’re doing at [Grace Bay Club](#) has been extremely positive, which is very exciting to see.